

## Noise Management

Doc Reference:	DoMN-WHSMS 3.6
Version Number:	1.3

### Purpose

To define the requirements for the control of noise exposure to prevent occupational noise induced hearing loss and the requirements for audiometric testing.

### Scope

This procedure applies to all workers of the Diocese of Maitland – Newcastle (DoMN).

### Definitions and Terms

Term	Definition
Competent Person	A person who has acquired the appropriate knowledge and skills to carry out a task through training, qualification or experience.
DoMN	Diocese of Maitland – Newcastle
Exposure Standard	An 8-hour noise equivalent of 85dB(A) or peak noise level of more than 140dB(C).
Hazardous Noise	Noise that exceeds the exposure standard for noise in the workplace.

### Responsibilities

Position	Responsibilities
Manager WHS Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying situations where noise levels may exceed exposure standards and contribute to hearing loss;</li> <li>Arranging for a noise assessment to be carried out by a competent person where noise levels are suspected to potentially exceed exposure standards;</li> <li>Where noise levels have been identified as exceeding noise exposure standards, implementing adequate risk control measures to minimise the risk of noise induced hearing loss;</li> <li>Providing hearing protection to workers where noise levels exceed the exposure standard;</li> <li>Communicating to workers (including contractors) the areas where hearing protection must be worn;</li> <li>Providing information to workers on noise and the risks from noise exposure; and</li> <li>Signposting areas where hearing protections must be worn.</li> </ul>
Human Resources Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-ordinating audiometric testing for DoMN workers required to frequently wear hearing protection to protect from the risk of hearing loss; and</li> <li>Maintaining records of audiometric testing and any other health screening undertaken in relation to noise exposure.</li> </ul>
Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complying with the requirements of this procedure;</li> <li>Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided to protect from hearing loss; and</li> <li>Reporting noise related hazards and incidents to the OHS Manager.</li> </ul>

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### Procedure

#### 1. Identification of Noise Hazards

The DoMN Manager/WHS Manager will undertake an inspection of each workplace to identify areas where noise levels may exceed exposure standards. As a guide, if a person needs to raise their voice to communicate with someone one (1) metre away, noise levels may be hazardous to hearing.

Some examples of areas, work activities or plant which may result in noise levels exceeding exposure standards include (but is not limited to):

- Plant Rooms
- Generator Rooms
- Chiller Rooms
- Fire Pump Rooms
- Air handling units
- Use of power tools
- High traffic loading docks
- Gardening and maintenance activities e.g. lawn mowing

DoMN should also refer to information/instruction manuals provided by plant manufacturers or suppliers which should indicate the noise emission levels of the operational plant.

#### 2. Assessing Noise Hazards

Where noise levels have been identified that appear to exceed exposure standards, a competent person shall be engaged to undertake a noise assessment. Where information already exists on the noise level of an item of plant or equipment (e.g. as documented in the manufacturer’s instruction manual), a noise assessment may not be necessary if it is the only item of equipment located within a dedicated area (e.g. Plant Room). If several items of plant are located within the one area (Plant Room), an assessment may still be required even if each individual noise level is below the exposure standard.

A competent external provider will be engaged to undertake noise assessments in accordance with the process described in *AS/NZS 1269.1:2005 Occupational Noise Management - Measurement and assessment of noise emission and exposure*.

#### 3. Risk Control Measures

Where the noise environment is identified to be above exposure standards, practical actions will be taken to control and reduce noise emissions in that area in accordance with the hierarchy of controls.

##### Elimination

Wherever possible, the source of noise will be eliminated completely e.g. ceasing use of noisy machinery, changing the way work is carried out so hazardous noise is not produced or by not introducing the hazard into the workplace.

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### Substitution

When purchasing new plant or equipment for a site, the noise emission level must be considered. Invitations for tender for the supply of new plant should specify the requirement to notify noise emission data and this must be considered when purchasing the plant.

Where noise levels for existing plant or equipment have been identified as exceeding noise exposure standards as a result of a noise assessment or identified in an instruction manual, the task of controlling the noise must be addressed. Replacement of the item of plant or equipment may be considered where cost effective and/or practical (e.g. smaller items such as power tools). Priority should be given to equipment that contributes the highest noise exposure levels to the largest number of workers.

### Engineering Controls

Where it is not practical to eliminate high noise levels, minimising the noise at its source must be considered including:

- Fitting exhaust mufflers on internal combustion engines;
- Using rubber mounts and flexible connections;
- Fixing damping materials (such as rubber) or stiffening to panels to reduce vibration;
- Fitting sound-absorbing materials to hard reflective surfaces;
- Changing fan speeds or the speeds of particular components;
- Changing the material of equipment parts (e.g. change metal components to plastic components); and
- Changing the layout and the location of workstations/work areas relative to plant noise levels.

### Isolation

Where engineering controls are not practical, isolation of the source of noise from workers must be considered including:

- Building enclosures, sound proof covers, barriers or screens around noise sources; and
- Locating noise sources further away from workers.

The Manager will implement preventative maintenance on all plant and equipment to further minimise deterioration which may lead to an increase in noise levels from poorly operating components.

### Administration

Administrative noise control measures reduce the amount of noise to which a person is exposed by:

- Rotating work to reduce the amount of time a worker is exposed to noise;
- Providing information, instruction and training to workers so they understand the risks associated with noise and can limit their exposure; and
- Sign-posting areas that contain noise levels above the exposure standard and restricting access.

### Training

DoMN workers who are required to work in areas where hearing protection is required, shall receive training in the health risks associated with noise exposure and the requirements of this procedure.

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Training objectives to be established will include:

- Hazards and risks to hearing at DoMN premises;
- Steps that can be taken to reduce risks and current control measures implemented;
- The requirements, use and maintenance of hearing protection; and
- Audiometric testing processes (where relevant).

Contractors will receive information during the induction regarding noise hazards, an overview of the requirements of this procedure and areas where hearing protection must be worn.

### Personal Protective Equipment

Where it is not possible to minimise the risk of exposure to high noise levels by any of the preceding means, PPE in the form of hearing protection (e.g. ear muffs or ear plugs) will be provided to workers required to work in high noise areas. PPE provided will be suitable for the task and based on the recommendations provided in the noise assessment.

Workers required to use hearing protection will be provided with training on appropriate use, cleaning, storage and maintenance of the equipment. PPE must be inspected by the worker prior to each use and any defects reported to a Manager to enable repair or replacement.

### 4. Audiometric Testing

Where DoMN workers are frequently required to use PPE to protect from exposure to noise above the exposure standard, audiometric testing will be provided within three (3) months of the worker commencing work and every two (2) years thereafter. Where hearing loss is identified as a result of audiometric testing, a thorough investigation must be conducted (in accordance with 4.3 Incident Reporting and Investigation procedure) to identify potential sources of hearing loss and the effectiveness of current control measures.

Workers will be consulted on this process prior to testing to ensure they understand the reasons for the testing and the means by which DoMN will provide this testing.

Results of audiometric testing will be provided to workers and confidential records maintained by the Human Resources Department.

### Forms

- Nil.

### References

- [Work Health & Safety Regulation 2017 \(NSW\) Part 4.1](#)
- [Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice](#)
- [AS/NZS 1269:2005 Occupational Noise Management \(series\)](#)

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